

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1119

By Gant

A RESOLUTION to recognize Joe "Sugarman" Williams for his meritorious service to the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Tennessee have, throughout the years, been called upon to take up arms against the enemies of this great nation, risking their lives and leaving their loved ones behind to honorably safeguard the freedoms and liberties guaranteed to all citizens of these United States and vanquishing those who threaten our way of life; and

WHEREAS, while the heroic deeds of Tennesseans have been extolled throughout the history of our State and nation, the distinguished military service of every proud Tennessean should be illuminated, shared, and properly honored; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is Joe "Sugarman" Williams, who proudly served this nation as a member of the United States Army and continued his dedication to his fellow citizens as a public servant after his retirement from military service; and

WHEREAS, born on October 26, 1934, the first of the seven children of Brown Lee and Sadie Williams, Joe Williams attended Fayette County Training School in Fayette County before being joined in holy matrimony with his beloved wife, Mildred Rhodes, on December 20, 1952; and

WHEREAS, the Williamses' joyous union has been blessed with five children, Bobby, Marcus, Alvin, Sharon, and Phyliss, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, enlisting in the United States Army in May 1955, Mr. Williams spent the next thirty-one years fighting for that precious thing we know as freedom. First promoted to the rank of Private First Class, he would ultimately attain the rank of Master Sergeant; and

WHEREAS, Master Sergeant Joe Williams was responsible for the maintenance of 103 personnel carriers, 150 wheel vehicles, and 116 tanks with the 1st Battalion of the 16th Mechanical Infantry; and

WHEREAS, Master Sergeant Williams spent twelve years on foreign soil in Germany, Korea, and Thailand; he fought in the Vietnam War from January 1971 to November 1971 and was awarded the Bronze Star (first award) for bravery in ground operations against hostile forces; and

WHEREAS, in all, Master Sergeant Joe Williams received twenty-four military medals and ribbons, including the Bronze Star for Bravery (one award), the Meritorious Service Award (one award), and the Army Commendation Medal (six awards), in addition to numerous letters of commendation and appreciation from Generals, Senators, Congressmen, and Mayors; and

WHEREAS, retiring from military service on May 31, 1986, Joe Williams entered civilian life as a civil servant professional and worked until 1997, when he took his well-deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Williams is a member of the Noncommissioned Officers Association of the United States Army and a lifetime member of the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, today, Joe Williams is a member of the 12th United States Colored Troops and participates in Civil War reenactments across the nation, a most fitting pastime as he is the great-grandson of Private Peter Williams of Company A of the 6th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery, who was among the 262 African-American artillery soldiers garrisoned at Fort Pillow during the massacre that occurred on April 12, 1864, and who, unlike many of his comrades in arms, survived the horrors of that day and lived well into the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, while no offering can properly relay our gratitude for his bravery and dedication to preserving the blessed freedom that is inseparable from our American heritage

and ideals, it is most appropriate that we should honor Joe Williams to the full extent of our ability, as he made untold and innumerable sacrifices to preserve the liberties we enjoy today; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor Joe "Sugarman" Williams for living the examined life with courage and conviction and thank him for his distinguished military service to our nation as one of Tennessee's most heroic citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.